provisions have been included in the Model Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act formulated by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2003 and circulated to the State Governments for considering suitable amendments in their concerned Act by adopting those provisions. The Model Act provided for the registration of contract farming sponsors and recording of contract farming agreements with the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee or a prescribed authority under the Act, protection of title or rights of the farmers over the land under such contracts, dispute settlement mechanism and a model draft agreement suggesting various terms and conditions. By now, relevant provisions have been made by several State Governments in their respective APMC Acts for providing a legal framework to contract farming. In seven States/Union Territories there are no APMC Acts, therefore, there is no regulation of contract farming in such States/ UTs. The Model Act circulated by the Ministry is suggestive in nature, and, since Agriculture is a State subject, it is for the State Governments to, decide on the implementation of the contract farming arrangements in their State.

Combating hunger through investment in agriculture

1991. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Director-General of FAO of the UN has recently commented while in India that India needs to strengthen its efforts to combat hunger through more investments in agriculture;

(b) whether India has succeeded to reduce its share of hungry people from 39 per cent to 20 per cent;

(c) whether according to FAO statistics for the year 2006, one in four persons remained hungry in India as compared to one in five in China; and,

(d) what are the steps being taken to increase investments in agricultural sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) In his speech delivered at M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation's Conference held in Chennai on 07-08-07, Director General of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) mentioned that investments in agriculture, and more broadly in the rural economy, are often prerequisites for accelerated hunger reduction. In his earlier speech on 06-08-07 at New Delhi, he pointed out that out of total hungry people of the world, one in four are found in India and one in five are found in China.

According to *The State of Food Insecurity in the World* brought out by the FAO, the proportion of undernourished (hungry) in total population of India has come down from 38 per cent in 1979-81 to 20 per cent in 2001-03.

(d) The Approach Paper to the Eleventh Five Year Plan has envisaged that overall agricultural investment would need to be about 16 per cent of agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with public investment contributing 4 to 5 per cent during the Eleventh Plan.

The National Development Council (NDC) in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007 has also emphasized to evolve a strategy to rejuvenate agriculture. It involves, *inter alia*, the following crucial elements:

- The State Governments are to prepare District and State Agriculture Plans for prioritizing the investment in the sector.
- Introduction of a new scheme for Additional Central Assistance (ACA) to State Plans. The newly created National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) would assist States in planning for rain fed areas.
- Provision of additional resources for irrigation.
- Strategic focus on the national agricultural research effort.
- New initiatives for skill development for the farming community.

The Government of India has recently approved two schemes for enhancement of foodgrains productivity and production and for improving overall growth of agriculture. These are: (i) National Food Security Mission (NFSM), and (ii) Additional Central Assistance Scheme (ACAS) for implementing the State and District Plans for agricultural development.

Declining fertility of soil

†1992. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether fertility of soil is constantly declining in the country;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to deal with this problem;

(c) whether the production per hectare is declining in comparison to earlier years despite use of good quality seeds, fertilizers, etc.;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government are providing any help to the farmers to meet the losses incurred due to above situation; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) There are instances of deterioration of soil fertility/certain nutrient deficiencies in some parts of the country, especially in Indo-Gangetic plains, due to continuous imbalanced use of chemical fertilizers.

(b) The Government is promoting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) by advocating soil test based balanced and judicious use of chemical fertilizer including secondary and micronutrients in conjunction with organic manures and bio-fertilizers. The Government is also educating farmers through training and field demonstration on balanced use of fertilizers for improving soil fertility.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.